

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2482

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0081

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SWEL, ET

SUBJECT: FUTURE OF PROJECT CONCERN AT KEREN

1. AMCITS ASSOCIATED WITH PROJECT CONCERN, WHICH FOR ABOUT PAST TEN MONTHS HAS BEEN OPERATING MEDICAL SERVICES AND HOSPITAL AT KEREN, INDICATE THAT FUTURE POSITION OF PROJECT CONCERN, BOTH AT KEREN AND NATIONALLY IN U.S. AND INTERNATIONALLY IS BLEAK.

2. AT PRESENT THERE ARE EIGHT AMCITS AND 2 SWEDES WITH PROJECT CONCERN AT KEREN. CONSIDERATION REPORTEDLY IS BEING EXTENDED CURRENTLY BY BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF PROJECT CONCERN IN CALIFORNIA TO REDUCE STAFF FROM CURRENT TEN TO ONE AMCIT NURSE, ONE SWEDISH DOCTOR (ALREADY AT KEREN), AND ONE SWISS ADMINISTRATOR, WITH POSSIBLE REDUCTION TO TAKE PLACE ABOUT MAY 1, 1974. CURRENT AMERICAN ADMINISTRATOR (HERBERT FLEENOR) EXPECTS TO DEPART EARLY IN APRIL AND TO BE REPLACED BY SWISS CITIZEN (RAYMOND LASERRE), WHO RECENTLY WAS WITH PROJECT CONCERN AT HONG KONG.

3. REASONS FOR PROPOSED REDUCTIONS INCLUDE TOTAL WORLD-WIDE BUDGET OF PROJECT CONCERN (\$2 MILLION), BUDGET AT KEREN (US\$10,000 PER MONTH WHICH BOARD IS PLANNING TO REDUCE TO US\$3,500), AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL AND FUND RAISING PROBLEMS
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BEING ENCOUNTERED BY PROJECT CONCERN IN U.S., STEMMING

PRINCIPALLY FROM RECENT RESIGNATION OF DR. TURPIN WHO WAS FOUNDER, LEADING FUND RAISER, AND MAJOR MOTIVATOR. TURPIN (WHOSE COLLEGE-AGE SON REPORTEDLY WAS KILLED RECENTLY IN AIRPLANE CRASH IN U.S. IS SAID TO HAVE WITHDRAWN COMPLETELY FROM ACTIVITIES OF PROJECT CONCERN. IN ADDITION, BOARD REPORTEDLY IS EXPERIENCING SEVERE MONEY AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS IN OPERATIONS AT HONG KONG, VIETNAM, MEXICO, AND OTHER AREAS INCLUDING APPALACHIA.

4. LOCAL INFORMANTS BELIEVE BOARD, WHICH CURRENTLY IS CONSIDERING KEREN OPERATION, PROBABLY WILL DECIDE IN NEAR FUTURE TO CONTINUE PRESENCE OF PROJECT CONCERN BUT TO REDUCE PERSONNEL FROM TEN TO THREE, TO REDUCE BUDGET FROM \$10,000 TO 3,500 PER MONTH, AND TO REDUCE FUNCTIONS OF KEREN HOSPITAL TO MINIMUM IN TREATMENT OF PATIENTS.

5. COMMENT: PROBLEMS AT KEREN STEM PRINCIPALLY FROM BASIC PROBLEMS OF PROJECT CONCERN AS A PHILANTHROPIC ORGANIZATION IN THE U.S. LOSS OF DR. TURPIN REPORTEDLY IS RESULTING NOT ONLY IN ORGANIZATIONAL TURMOIL, BUT ALSO IN DECLINE IN PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO PROJECT CONCERN SINCE TURPIN WAS CHARISMATIC FUND RAISER. ACCORDINGLY, FUTURE OF PROJECT CONCERN AT KEREN WILL BE CLOSELY RELATED TO FUTURE OF WHOLE ORGANIZATION.
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